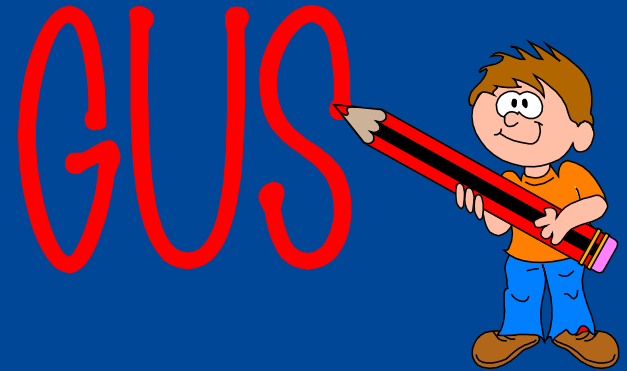




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# The Early Years landscape in Scotland: Findings from the Growing Up in Scotland study

Paul Bradshaw

Scotland's leading independent social research institute



## Aims of the presentation

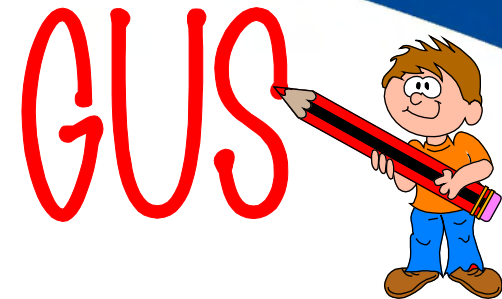
- To provide an overview of the early years experiences of families and children in Scotland
- To demonstrate some of the stark differences in this experience across families with different characteristics



[www.growingupinScotland.org.uk](http://www.growingupinScotland.org.uk)



# What is the Growing Up in Scotland study?



Mental health

Obesity

Accidents and injuries

Family

Diet

Behaviour

Parenting styles

GUS: The **A** to **Z** of the Early Years

Child health

Neighbourhood

Resilience

Childcare

Lone parents

Attachment

Education

Parental support

Social networks



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Ante-natal &  
post-natal  
periods

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## Birth planning

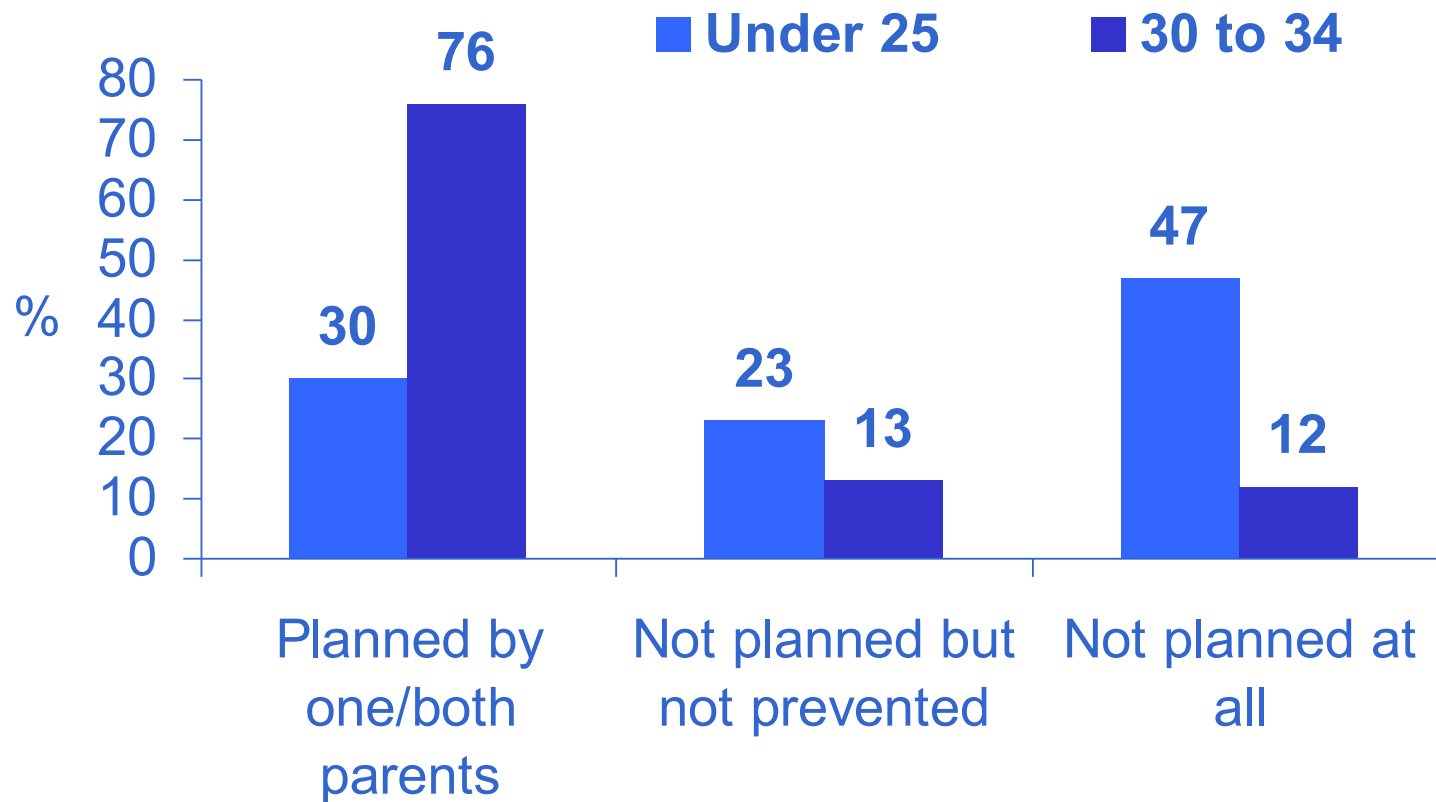
**59%** were planned by  
one/both parents

**17%** were not planned  
but not 'prevented'

**24%** were not planned  
at all'



## Variations in birth planning by maternal age



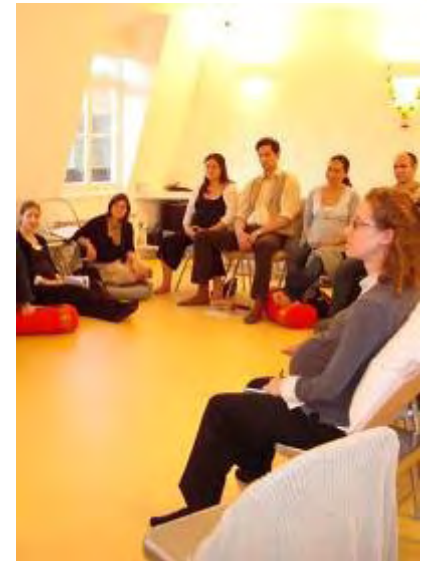


## Attendance at ante-natal classes (first-time mothers only)

**57%** attended all or most  
classes

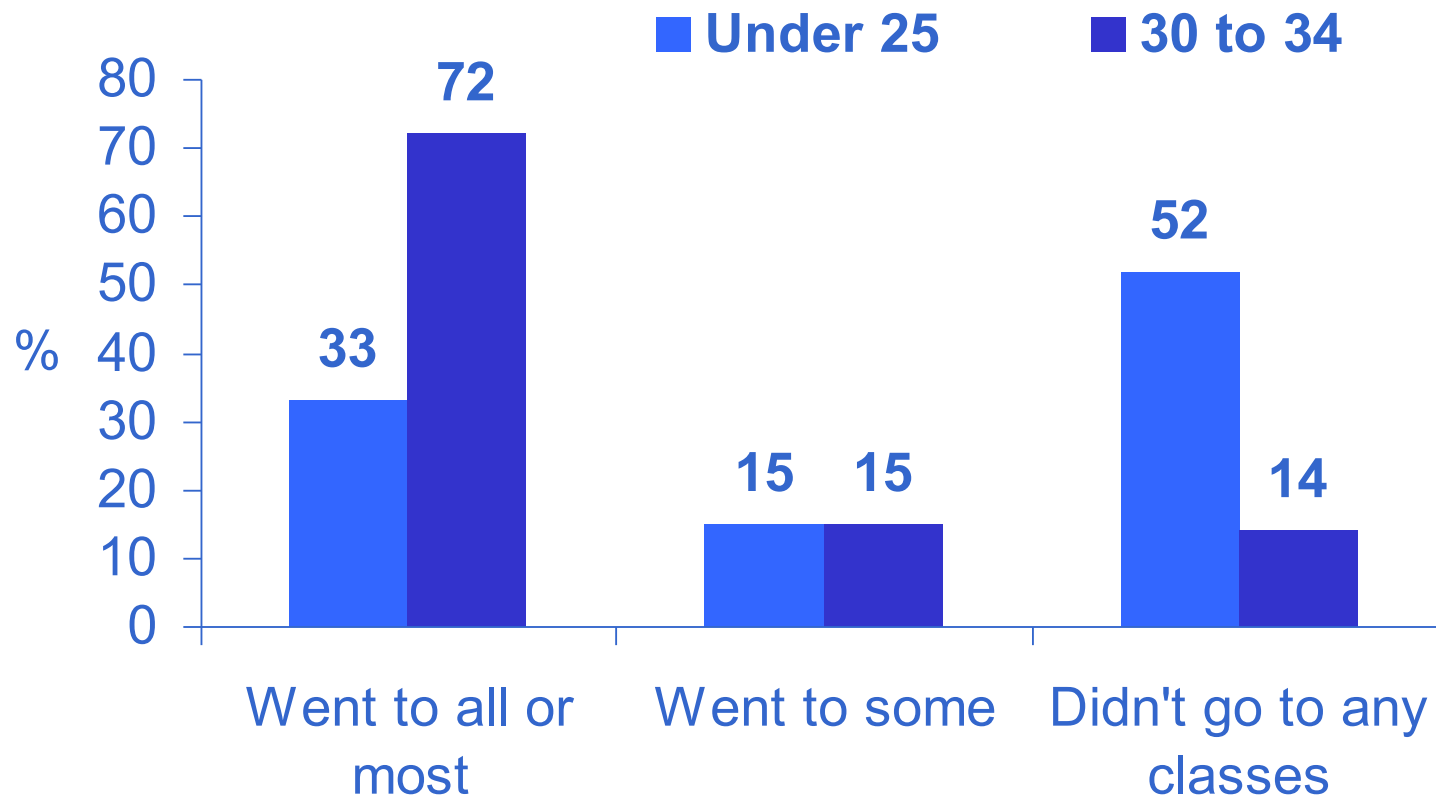
**14%** attended only some  
classes

**24%** did not attend  
any classes





## Variations in ante-natal class attendance by maternal age





## Breastfeeding

**60%** of children were breastfed for  
at least some length of time

Of those who breastfed...

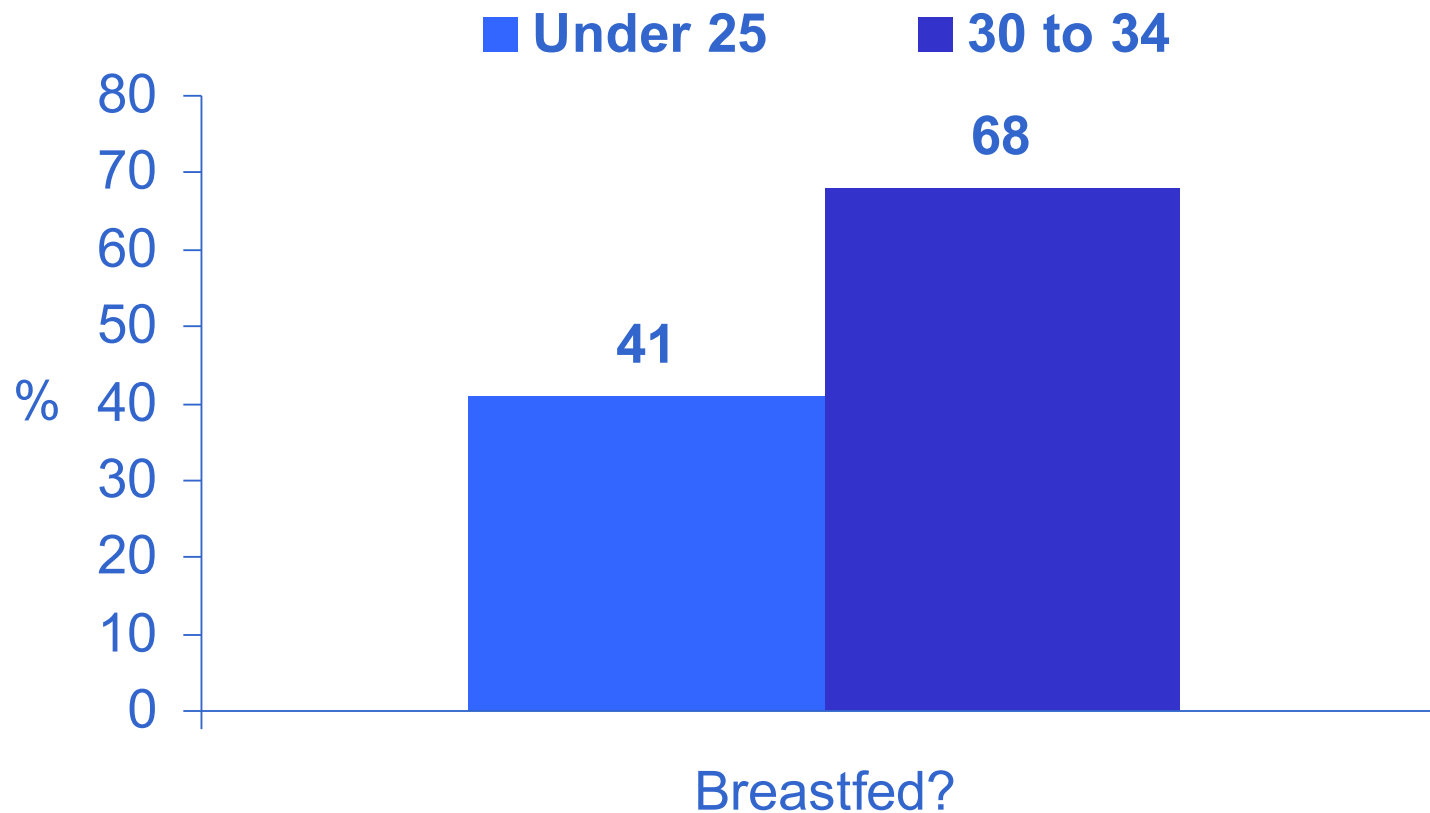
**30%** did so for less than  
6 weeks

**31%** did so for  
between  
6wks to 5mth

**39%** did so for  
6mths or  
more



## Variations in breastfeeding by maternal age





## Breastfeeding and antenatal classes

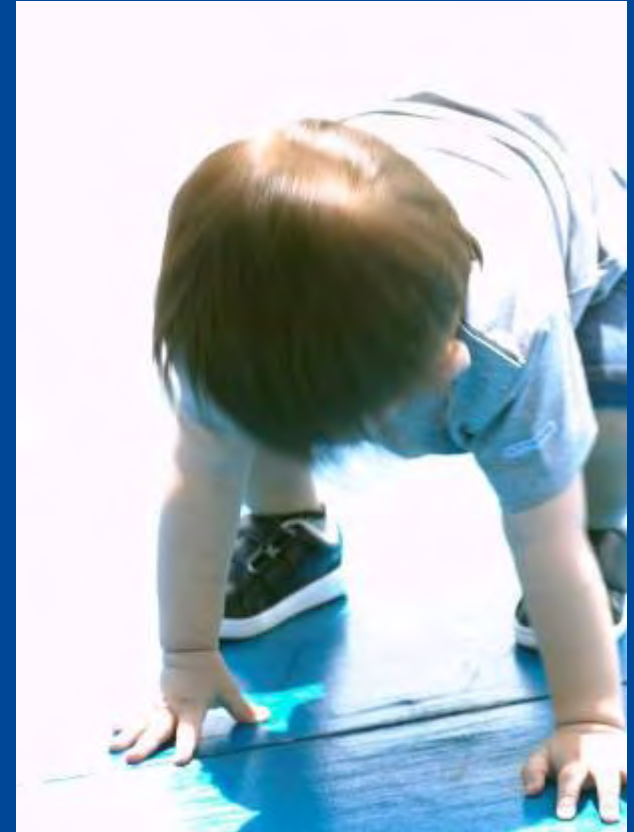
“Women who attended all or some ante-natal classes were significantly more likely to initiate breastfeeding, even after controlling for the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of those most likely to attend”



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## Babies and Toddlers



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## Family circumstances at 10 months

**21%** of families had an annual  
income of less than £8400

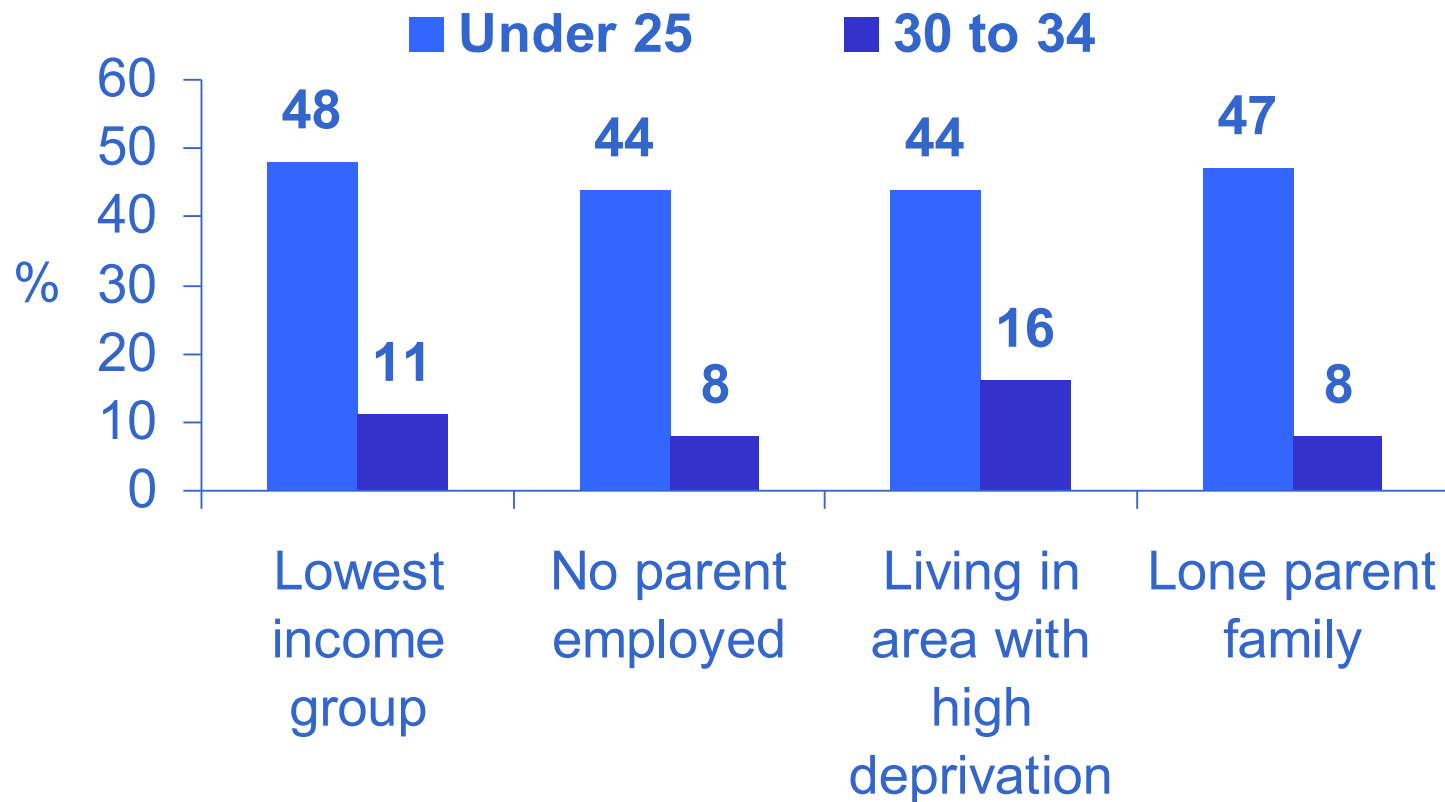
**81%** of families had at least 1  
parent in employment

**25%** live in areas in the most  
deprived quintile

**20%** were lone parent  
families



# Family characteristics at 10mths by maternal age





## Home-learning environment

### Daily activities at 22 months:

**58%** singing songs or nursery rhymes

**79%** looking at books or  
reading stories

**28%** painting or drawing

**30%** Recognising numbers,  
letters or shapes



## Average score on HLE index by maternal age

42.5

Under 25

44.9

25 to 29

45.7

30 to 34

45.4

35 or older

44.6

All families



## HLE and cognitive ability

“...activities do have an influence on children's cognitive development and they can moderate - though by no means eradicate - the effect of socio-demographic disadvantage.”



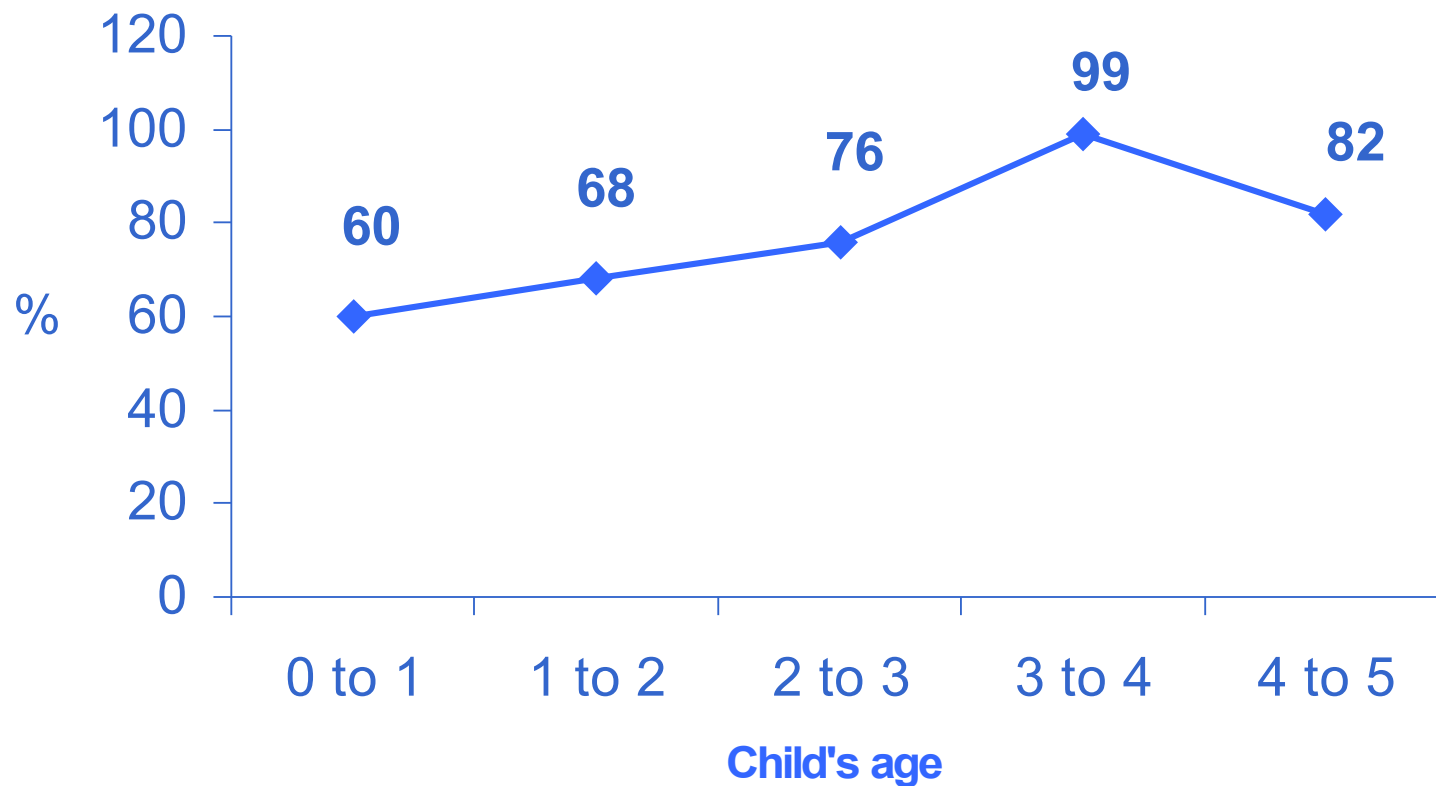
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## Childcare & pre- school



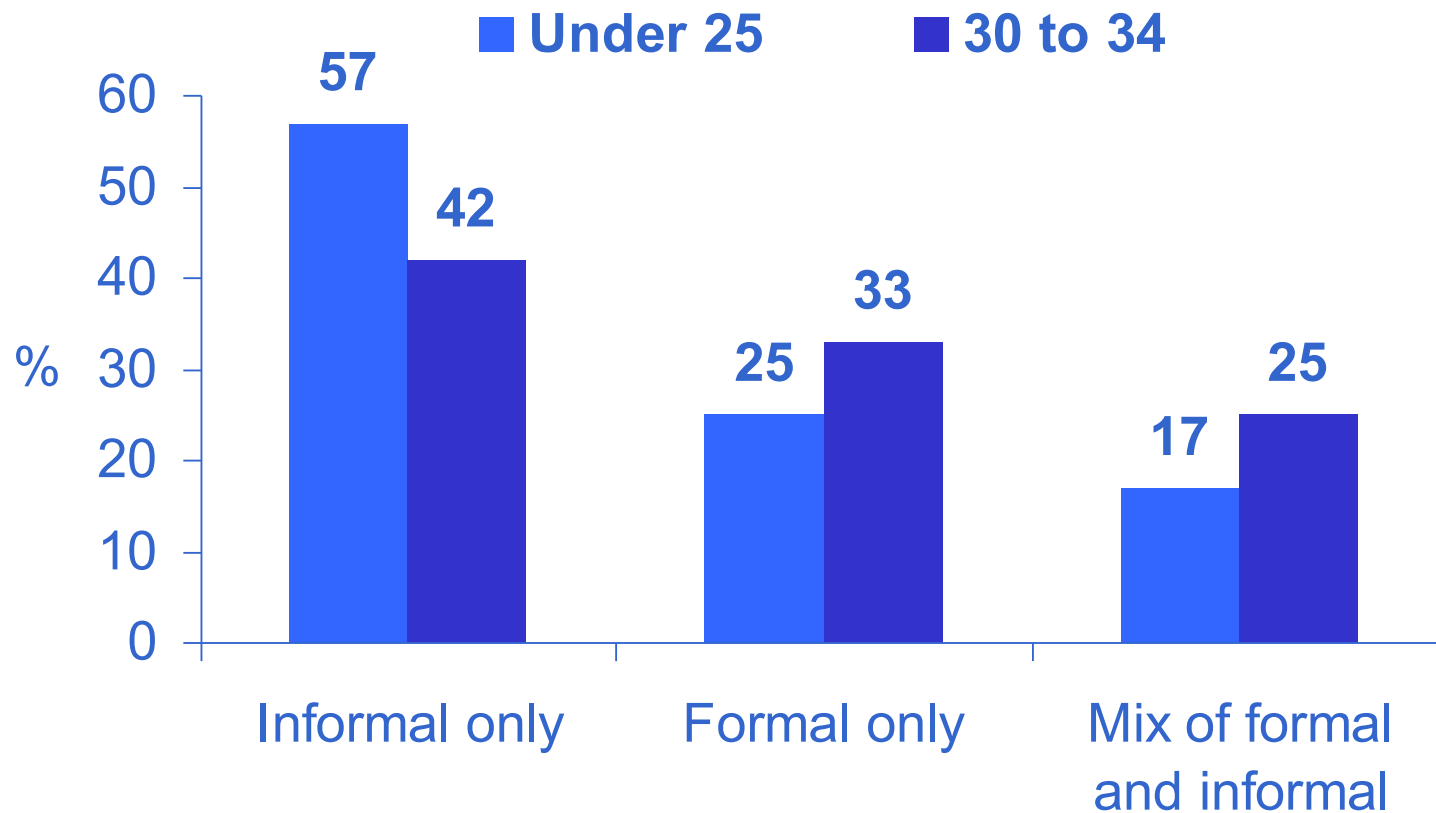
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## Use of childcare by child's age





## Types of childcare at 22 months by maternal age





## Readiness for pre-school

Most parents believed their child was 'ready' to start pre-school:

**70%** disagreed that their child was reluctant to go

**90%** felt their child was able to mix well

**80%** believed their child to be independent enough to cope



## Average score on pre-school readiness index by maternal age

18.3

Under 25

18.5

25 to 29

19.0

30 to 34

18.9

35 or older

18.7

All families



## Cognitive and behavioural outcomes at 34 & 46 months

Most children had good cognitive skills at 34 mths  
and no behavioural difficulties at 46mths

**29%** of children were below average in  
their language skills

**85%** of parents had no concerns about  
their child's language

**11%** of children had moderate or severe  
behavioural difficulties



## Average score on naming vocabulary test by maternal age

66

Under 25

71

25 to 29

75

30 to 34

74

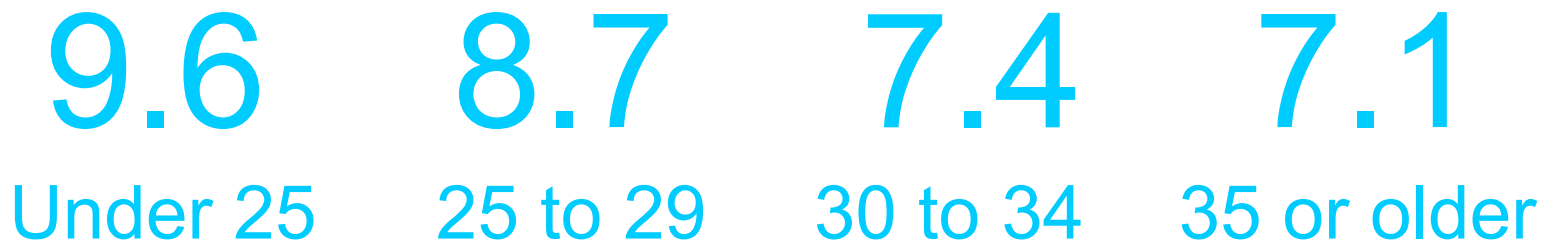
35 or older

71

All families



## Average score on total difficulties scale by maternal age



**8.2**  
All families



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Primary school



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## School choice

Factors most important to parents when choosing a school:

**70%** school near or nearest to home

**51%** Good impression of the school

**42%** siblings already attend



## Involvement in child's education

**62%** of parents had visited the school,  
volunteered or attended an event

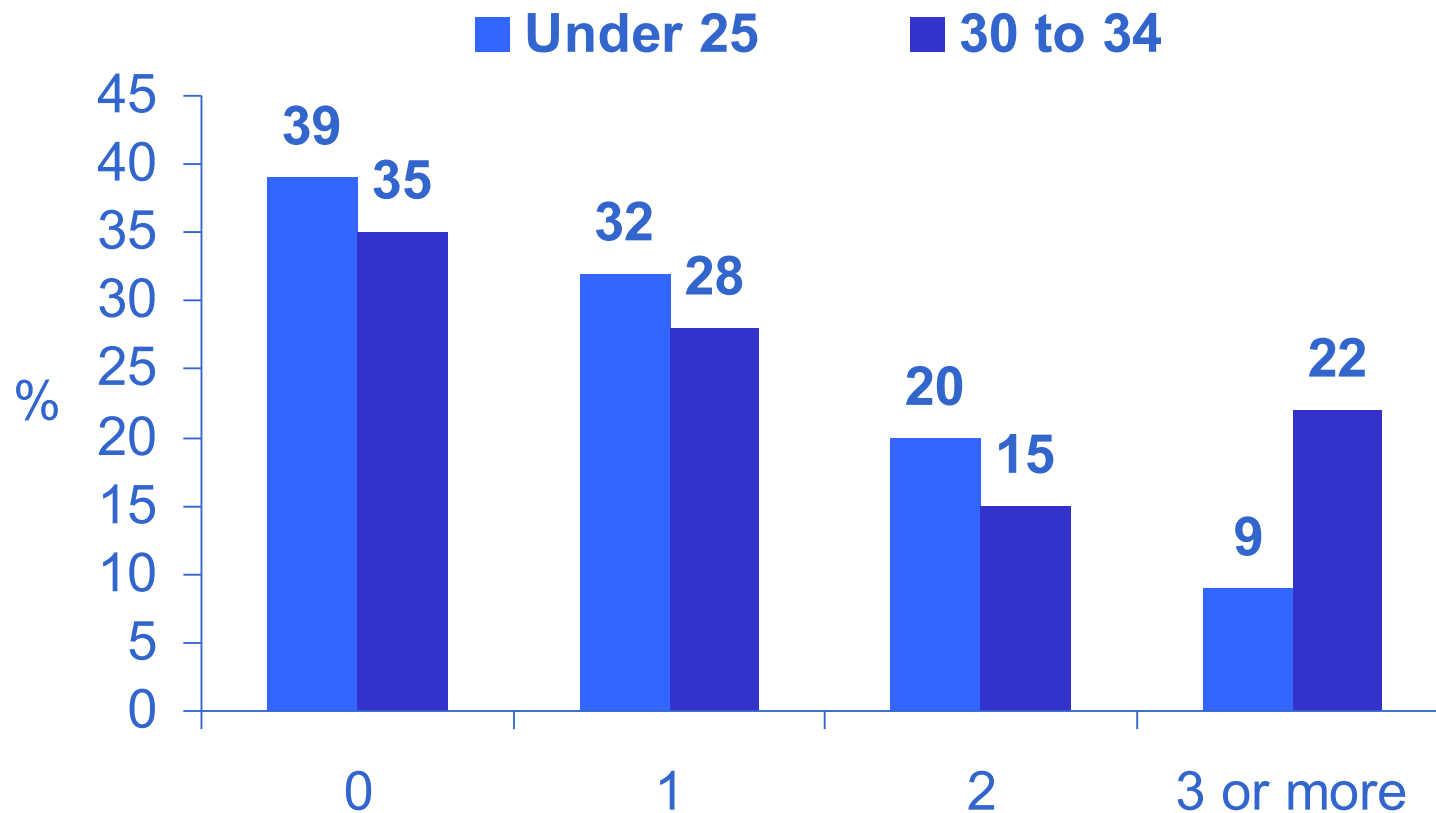
**7%** had volunteered in the  
classroom, office or library

**19%** had met with Headteacher

**30%** had attended a  
school event



## Level of school involvement by maternal age





## Summary

- For most children the early years experience is a positive one
- A minority experience significant disadvantage from birth, and before
- This disadvantage affects outcomes and experiences throughout the early years period
- However, disadvantage does not automatically equate to a poor experience or outcomes